To Mr. Paul Metzler, Mr. Paul Mooney
Miss Marie Kirkwood
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Diana and Her Nymphs Departing for the Chase
PETER PAUL RUBENS
(Flemish, 1577-1640)

Rubens is the major Flemish painter of the seventeenth century whose great patron was the Infanta Isabella and the Archduke Ferdinand of the Hapsburg House in Flanders for whom he not only painted but also acted as diplomat to the courts of England, France and Spain.

This picture represents Diana and her Nymphs departing for the Chase. It was painted by Rubens between the years 1612 and 1620 and is to be associated with such other paintings of the period as the RAPE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF LYSIPPUS in Munich and the VENUS AND ADONIS at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The head of the nymph at the extreme right is the portrait of his first wife, Isabella Brant, and should be compared with the intimate portrait sketch of her that was purchased by the Museum in 1947 and was painted about 1620. The landscape in the distance, the plants in the foreground (similar to those in his VENUS AND ADONIS in Dusseldorf) and the figures are all painted by Rubens himself. The dogs are considered to have been painted by his contemporary Franz Snyders after Rubens' designs, especially the one Diana caresses.

The composition is typically baroque, with diagonal figures leading into the picture deliberately cut at the edge of the canvas to create a feeling of movement. In this picture all the important elements of Rubens' painting can be found: figure studies, still life, portrait and landscape, with the rich painterly technique so characteristic and in such excellent condition.

The provenance of this painting can be traced back to 1796 when it was sold in Amsterdam from the collection of Elisabeth Hooft. Since that time it has been in various English collections: Mr. Bryan; C. Hibbert, 1850; Sir Simon H. Clarke, Bart., Oakhill, 1840; Nieuwenhuys; Thomas Baring, Esq.; Thomas George Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook.

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